

The Wonder of Calvary

by William MacDonald

The sermon emphasizes the significance of the cross and the depth of God's love for us, and challenges listeners to appreciate the power of the cross in their lives.

Duration: 48:43

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Acts 20:28

Topics: "Calvary"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses four great truths that have impacted his soul. The first truth is a new appreciation of who the Lord Jesus really is. The second truth is a consideration of what Jesus did on the cross of Calvary. The third truth is the people for whom Jesus did it, which includes the whole human race. And the fourth truth is the marvelous blessings that have flowed as a result of Jesus' work on the cross. The speaker emphasizes the transient and frail nature of human life, as well as the sinful state of humanity. However, despite our flaws, Jesus loved us enough to die for us. The speaker encourages the audience to consider Jesus, His sacrifice, and the incredible dimensions of our redemption.

Transcript

Let's look to the Lord in prayer. Father, we just look to you in the sacred name of the Lord Jesus. We pray that we might hear your voice as we look into your word today.

And we pray that we might go back another way. Lord, that the revolutionary truths of your word might transform our lives so that we can never be the same again. We ask it in the Savior's name and for his sake.

Amen. Would you turn in your Bibles, please, just for a single verse to Acts chapter 20 and verse 28. And at first you will see no connection between the verse and what I'm going to say, which is not at all unusual for preachers.

Acts chapter 20 and verse 28. Paul speaking to the elders of Ephesus at Miletum. There he says, Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to shepherd the church of God which he purchased with his own blood.

And I'm thinking especially this morning of the last part of the verse, the church of which he purchased with his own blood. Now that's rather unusual, isn't it? It's rather shocking, as a matter of fact. Because the

antecedent of he is God.

The verse says that he purchased the church with his own blood. We'll talk about that later. You know, the implications of the Christian faith are awesome.

When you think of Calvary, the love of Calvary, there's a certain logic connected with it as well. And we can say this expression, Christ died for the ungodly. And you know, the truth of that is so tremendous that it's enough to rock the universe.

And in the shadow of Calvary, there's no room for mediocrity. When you think of what happened at the cross, it really has to be everything or nothing. I say there's no room for an average Christianity.

It has to be everything or nothing. To be tepid about the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ is an insult to his majesty. And it was for good reason that he said to the church of Laodicea, Because you're lukewarm, neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth.

Well, that's strong words. Those are strong words. But really, when you consider the immensity of Calvary and the issues involved, they're absolutely true.

Ho-hum Christianity is a contradiction of terms. I mean, those words don't fit together. They're what you might call an oxymoron, you know.

An oxymoron, like he says he's going to Hawaii on business. Well, that's an oxymoron, you know. And ho-hum Christianity is an oxymoron.

Angels must marvel to see blood-bought people living for self and for pleasure. Or to see Christians who show more enthusiasm for possessions than they do for the Lord Jesus Christ. There's nothing that could be more incongruous than for people who've been died for to fail to acknowledge their Redeemer as Lord of all.

Stop with me this afternoon just to think, what would happen if the church, if all believers, if ransomed saints, would enter into a deep appreciation of what happened at the cross of Calvary and the empty tomb. Supposing their eyes were anointed with divine eye stuff, so that they could see as never before. What really happened there, they would be overwhelmed by the dimension of their salvation.

I want to tell you church buildings would be filled with people just involved in spontaneous worship. And Christians throughout the world would be going gossiping the gospel, urging men and women to be reconciled to Christ. If we really entered into the meaning of Calvary, the world would be evangelized.

And an un-evangelized world today is a lukewarm Christianity. It really is. Every once in a while a gleam of light comes into a person's life.

It's as if God draws back the curtain and this man or this woman sees it all. And sees what really happened there. A person can never be the same again.

The compelling significance of the middle cross. That man says, in effect, I've seen the vision. I have seen the vision.

And for self, he hopes that he'll never again succumb to the chill of his environment, which is so easy to do. A new drive takes over in his life. And he has a mission now.

What is it that has happened to him? Well, four great truths have burst in upon his soul. Second is the consideration of what he did there on the cross. Third is the people for whom he did it.

Fourth is the marvelous work he did. Consider us, favors that have flowed. Consider those four things this morning.

As we do so, let's just pray that the Lord will give us a deeper appreciation than we've ever had before. Of the drama of our redemption dimension in who he is. You know, leave out the Lord Jesus and life has no meaning.

Has absolutely no meaning. The Book of Ecclesiastes is a marvelous book for the meaning of life. And he came up empty.

Twenty-nine times in that book, the expression, dear friends, you have to get above the sun. Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus is the hub of history.

He's the center of eternity. The fountain. You really never find reality.

Who is he? Well, we could begin by saying he's the babe of Bethlehem. That perfect child she's holding in her arms. In many ways, a normal child.

Angels announce his arrival. And right away, there's a king and the people of Jerusalem. And yet Gentile wise men travel great distances to come and worship him.

He never was a child. And eventually an edict goes out to exterminate all the children of his approximate age. An effort to eliminate this harmless baby.

No child ever aroused such a... He was the babe of Bethlehem, but he was a lot more than that. He was a lot more than that. He's a man.

The fact that he's human is seen in the fact that he hungered. He thirsted. He grew weary.

In fact, he was so human in a way that the people rubbed shoulders with him and they never thought he was. He had so marvelously veiled his deity in a body of flesh. Beside he threw his most divine array and veiled his godhead in a garb.

And in that garb, this wondrous love displayed. Wonderful. Wonderful.

To his contemporaries, he seemed quite normal. In his twenties, he was a carpenter in Nazareth. I've often thought that that sanctified the occupation of carpenter down through the centuries.

At thirty, he embarked in a public ministry of preaching, teaching, healing, casting out demons, doing good wherever he went. Raising the dead. In a life where he lived.

In fact, when you read about him in Philippians chapter two, that's about the key word of the chapter. He lived for others. He inherited all the qualities of our humanity except one.

That's marvelous to me to think that once a man walked the dusty lanes of this earth, a man whose life was stainless, spotless, absolutely pure. He knew no sins. He did no sin.

Never an evil thought. Never a regret for having done something. Or a regret for not having done something.

Never came to the end of a day unfulfilled. Did only those things that pleased his Father. Tempted from without.

He was never tempted from within. Yes, he was tempted from without there in the wilderness, wasn't he? Never from within. Yes, our Lord is truly human.

And he's sinlessly human. But that's not all. I don't think you can ever comprehend a fraction of the meaning of our redemption until you remember he's God incarnate.

We want to think about that today. In that babe in Bethlehem, this is marvelous to me, every time I see a baby I think, Writer William Billings said, The poet said, Cold on the cradle falling, Low lies his head with the beast of the stall, Angels adore him in slumber.

And I like the way Booth Cliburn in his hymn said, Down from the born in a manger to his owner stranger, The young Jew, And that one who wore that carpenter's apron amid all the sod, Up with the slave's towel, The apron of a slave that day, That was giving them their breath, And make no mistake about it, dear friends, The one who gave sight, I tell you, when you're born blind, you need new optics, Creating new optics, Beggarly, When we try to, The mysterious union of God and man, There's hymns, I want to tell you, when I read, No man would have ever had, Taking upon himself human, To cause us to be, Died for us was not, It's the one we're dependent upon right now, I just take a breath, He's the upholder of all things, By the word of his, For me, To ever be the same, If I really appreciate

that, If I really take, Dying lamb, She's the Alpha, And the Omega, He's the bright red image, Of his person, He upholds all things, The king of kings, He's the lord of lords, There may be other religions, Where, Only the gods, Stand there before the cross, And when we do that, That's why I read that verse, I really think that verse is put there, For it's shocking, It's in the King James version that way, It's in the new King James version that way, It's in the new American Standard Bible that way, It's the new international version that way, It's in the revised standard version that way, First of all, God is immortal, Immortal means, He's not subject to death, As it says, The church of God, Which he shed, The answer of course, Is found in the incarnation, God came, And he became man, I

like the way Charles Wesley handles it, In a hymn that I know we all love, To mystery all, The immortal, Who can explore, In vain, The first born, Seraph, And here's the highest, You know, It's amazing that you and I, Have been seeing that, The question would be of course, He's here on earth, Running the universe, In a tomb, Meaning his own son, Today, That makes my mind, Reel off, Who gave himself, Little more, Than a, That strains the brain, To take in, What happened at Calvary, The difference, It wasn't simple, It's where, One man, Killed, It wasn't genocide, Worry that we developed, Such a deadly, Impact, Like we reel off words, Frustrating ourselves, Before him, In worship, Love, And utter, We can say them without, Emotion, It really, Seems, Sinful, To handle the truth, And it seems,

Sinful to me, To preach it, So blandly, And matter-of-factly, That continually, We have to bring, His holy fingers, Made the bow, Which grew the thorn, His holy fingers, Made the nails, That pierced his hand, He made the forest, Whence there sprung the tree, On which his body hung, The sky that darkened, Or his head, By him above the earth, Was spread, The sun that hit, From him his face, The spear that pierced his, The grave in which, His form was laid, Was hewn in rock, His hands had made, The throne on which,

He now appears, Was his from everlasting, Years, That poem really, Brings before us, Of what, Him, Consider what he did, The whole program, More amazing, Even more straining, To our brain, The whole human, Fortunate to live, In the age, Of the heart, Where man has, Peered out,

Into the universe, The more he, Peered into space, The more minuscule, The universe, Is of such, Marvelous, And great proportions, That the, That, In a pretty small speck, A difference, Is a speck, Of cosmic dust, What am I, If you look at us, We're really nothing, We're less than zero, In the universe, It's time, It's that, Marvelous question, The breath, Not only are we, Minuscule, But we're, Nothing more substantial than, One day I'm in, Full athletic strength, And the next day, A non, One day I'm, Emotionally, Transiency, Not only are we, Minuscule, Like a wind, It's like a, It's a hand breath, You know, It's, Like the weaver's, Shuttle, Dashing, Zone, Zone, We're transient, It's just not that, We're frail, Sinners, And sin, Has affected, Wonderfully in, Romans chapter three, Where,

Our being, Is infected, We're all sinners, We're capable of it, In fact, That scares me sometimes, A lot of times, It scares me to think, We, We did not love God, With all our, You know, Knowledge, We don't want you God, We don't want some, Cosmic deity, To be running our lives, We were ashamed, By the mention of it, Yet, You really never, In, That's the death, Thought, It's just, That wasn't the end, He rose from the, And a savior, And it, Treated like that, And then he, Then he sends the holy, He could have, Just, Dissolved the human race, In a nuclear, Imagine man, Sitting in the face, Of the Lord Jesus, Covering his face, With shame, And with pity, I tell you, If we really took it in, We'll ne'er repay, The debt of love, We've talked about, The love of Calvary, At the breaking of

bread, We come and we hear, The Lord Jesus saying, This is my body, Presenting our bodies, A living sacrifice, Holy, I think if we really, Understood it, If we really took it in, We'd, We'd go out, And grab people, We'd lose the titan, And so mechanically, Don't, And not a man, That I can stand, O Lord, Beneath thy cross, And number, Often we have to say, Oh wonder to my, I can stand the mystery, It's really enough, To take our breath, During, And there is the, Omnipotent, Omniscient, Lord, Once we do that, It'll be the same again, We can never, We can never, Spend our, We can never do that, We can never, Be content to be, From then on, We would say, We would have to say, With the apostle Paul, The love of Christ, Or say with David Livingstone, The love of Christ, God said it so

beautifully, In his, In his biography, Words that changed, The whole direction, Of my life, In a book in 1946, On my knees, And I did what I had never, Eight years, Before that, I had turned, But you know, Those words slew me, So we've considered, Him, We've considered, What he did for us, We've considered, The people for whom, He did it, And, Hopefully this afternoon, We'll go on, Considered Lord Jesus, What can we say, When we've considered afresh, Who you are, And what you did for us, Our hearts are filled, Our souls are thrilled, Not just in mere man, But the upholder, The creator and upholder, Of all things, The sovereign of the universe, Emmanuel, God with us, Appreciation of it, Lord Jesus, Expand the capabilities, Of our minds, And may we come to you, This day, If we've never done

it before, Say, Lord Jesus, You have died for me, Like bleeding hands and feet, Thing number 148, When I survey the wondrous cross, Richest gain I count, But whether we think of, The immense person of, We think of, The billions and billions, Of stars, That exist in the universe, And as it was said, We're just a cosmic, And yet you loved us, Even though, We were yet in our sins, Christ came, The man God, Wonderful work that was, Transpired on Calvary, We give you thanks that, It all has been done, And can it be that, There is now no longer, Any condemnation, We give you thanks for the bright, Portion that is ours, To live in, We think of, Lunch that is served, Downstairs, We thank you for the hands, That have prepared

it, Pray that our fellowship, May be sweet, That we may stimulate, Our

love and good deeds, Even as we see the days, We give you thanks, And we pray these things, In Jesus
name, We're going to head down, Just like we did, For a coffee break, In my right hand, The lunch will be
served, In the gymnasium,

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